

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
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R 150925Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9753  
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHU  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 DACCA 3797

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT PARA 1 LINE 4)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, BG  
SUBJECT: THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION AND NEXT STEPS IN DOMESTIC POLITI  
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SUMMARY: PRESIDENT ZIA HAS BEEN SWORN IN FOR A FIVE-YEAR  
TERM FOLLOWING WHAT WERE GENERALLY QUITE FREE ELECTIONS IN  
WHICH HE DEMONSTRABLY DEFEATED GENERAL OSMANI AND HIS LARGELY  
AWAMI LEAGUE SUPPORTERS. ZIA MADE BAKSAL A PRIMARY CAMPAIGN  
ISSUE AND TO THAT EXTENT THE VOTE CAN BE SEEN AS A NEGATIVE  
ONE AGAINST MUJIBISM. HE ALSO HAS CLEARLY GAINED THE POSI-  
TIVE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE. ALLEGATIONS OF IRREGULARITIES  
IN THE POLLING HAVE DIMINISHED AND, PRIVATELY,AWAMI LEAGUERS  
ADMIT THAT THEY WERE SOUNDLY DEFEATED AND REGARDLESS OF  
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SOME MISDEEDS AT THE VOTING BOOTHS THE FINAL MARGIN WAS A  
FAIR MEASURE OF THE POLIC SUPPORT FOR ZIA. THE CAM-  
PAIGN WAS BY AND LARGE A QUITE ONE BY LOCAL STANDARDS  
AND THE TURNOUT DID NOT QUITE MATCH THAT OF 1970. THE  
AWAMI LEAGUE NOW MUST FACE A FUTURE IN WHICH IT IS NO  
LONGER THE KEY PARTY OF THE COUNTRY WHILE JAGODAL AND THE  
OTHERS IN THE PRESIDENT'S ALLIANCE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT

THEIR MAJOR CAMPAIGN ASSET IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IS ZIA HIMSELF AND NOT A STRONG ORGANIZATION, ALTHOUGH STEPS MAY BE TAKEN TO STRENGTHEN IT. THE AWAMI LEAGUE, DEFEATED ON THE BAKSAL ISSUE, ODDLY APPEARS TO BE RENEWING ITS ASSERTION THAT BASKAL IS IMPORTANT. WITHIN THE LEAGUE THERE IS CONTINUING DEBATE AND A DIVISION OF THE PARTY MAY BE IN THE OFFING. JAGODAL, ON THE OTHER HAND, MAY (AND FROM ITS POINT OF VIEW, PERHAPS SHOULD) ATTEMPT TO RECRUIT THOSE POLITICALLY SENSITIVE PERSONS WHO HAVE CHOSEN TO STAY OUT OF POLITICS SINCE INDEPENDENCE. END SUMMARY.

1. WITH PRESIDENT ZIA SWORN IN FOR A FIVE-YEAR TERM BEGINNING JUNE 12, IT IS TIME TO LOOK BOTH BACK AT THE CAMPAIGN AND THE VOTING AND AHEAD TO THE PROMISED PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS WHICH ZIA HAD SAID HE WILL HOLD BEFORE OR DURING DECEMBER. IT IS AS YET UNCLEAR WHAT THE POWERS OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT WILL BE AND WHAT WILL BE THE DELINEATION OF POWER BETWEEN ZIA AND THE LEGISLATURE. HOWEVER THE ELECTION SHOWED THAT ZIA WITH THE SUPPORT OF THREE-QUARTERS OF THE VOTERS IN A CONSTITUENCY WHICH EMBRACES THE ENTIRE NATION WILL OVERSHADOW POLITICALLY ANY MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ELECTED BY ONLY 1/300 OF THE ELECTORATE. ZIA WILL THUS HAVE THE POWERS INHERENT IN THE WINNER OF A DIRECT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.

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2. ZIA'S MANDATE HAS BEEN SEEN FOR VARIOUS REASONS AS POSITIVE SUPPORT FOR HIM AND AS A NEGATIVE VOTE IN THE SENSE OF BEING A FLAT REJECTION OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE, BAKSAL, AND THE PAST OF MUJIBUR RAHMAN'S REGIME. ZIA HIMSELF AND OTHERS CAMPAIGNING ON HIS BEHALF VERY MUCH MADE BAKSAL THE TARGET OF THEIR SPEECHES. THE CORRUPTION AND LAW AND ORDER DIFFICULTIES OF THE LATTER PART OF MUJIB'S GOVERNMENT WERE EMPHASIZED AND, ACCORDING TO MANY WE HAVE TALKED TO, WERE AN IMPORTANT FACTOR IN GAINING VOTES FOR ZIA. THE ONE-PARTY SYSTEM INTRODUCED BY MUJIB IN THE FOURTH AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION AND THE ALLEGED DEPENDENCE OF MUJIB ON INDIA AND THE SOVIET UNION WERE OTHER SUBJECTS FREQUENTLY BROUGHT UP. HOW-

EVER ZIA ALSO STUMPED ON HIS OWN RECORD OF INCREASED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, IMPROVED LAW AND ORDER AND A GENERAL CLIMATE OF STABILITY. THESE ARE NOT THEMES WHICH ELICIT AS MUCH ENTHUSIASM AS THE NEGATIVE POINTS, BUT WE HAVE OBSERVED THAT THESE TOO DESERVE SOME CREDIT FOR THE RESULT.

3. OSMAN'S CAMPAIGN DWELT CHIEFLY ON HIS DEMAND THAT

BANGLADESH BE RETURNED TO A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT, BY WHICH HE MEANT THE FORM PREVAILING PRIOR TO THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FOURTH AMENDMENT. HERE HE WAS IN CONFLICT WITH AT LEAST A PORTION OF HIS AWAMI LEAGUE SUPPORTERS AS A SECTION OF THE LEAGUE DURING THE CAMPAIGN AND AFTER HIS STEADFASTLY MAINTAINED THAT THE BAKSAL ARRANGEMENT WAS CORRECT AND SHOULD BE REINSTATED. OSMANI, WHO HAD RESIGNED FROM THE AWAMI OVER THE PASSAGE OF THE FOURTH AMENDMENT, DID NOT DEFEND IT. HE ALSO CONCENTRATED ON QUESTIONS OF RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS AND OPENING UP OF POLITICAL ACTIVITY. HIS CAMPAIGN WAS HAMPERED BY HAGGLING AMONG HIS SUPPORTERS AND BY THE AWAMI LEAGUE'S PROJECTING ITSELF TO ITS EVENTUAL DISTRESS AT THE EXPENSE OF ITS CANDI-  
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DATE.

4. THE ALLEGATIONS BY OSMANI AND OTHERS IN HIS CAMP IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE POLLING THAT IRREGULARITIES OCCURRED HAVE SHARPLY DIMINISHED IN THE PAST WEEK. AWAMI LEAGUERS AND OTHERS SUPPORTING OSMANI HAVE THEMSELVES TOLD US THAT THEY WERE CLEARLY AND SOUNDLY DEFEATED AND THAT IF SOME ELECTION IRREGULARITIES OCCURRED THEY DID NOT AFFECT THE RESULT IN ANY SIGNIFICANT WAY. MORE NEUTRAL OBSERVERS HAVE CHARACTERIZED THE POLLING AS WELL DONE IN THE LOCAL CONTEXT AND HAVE CONTRASTED IT WITH THE OPEN RIGGING OF MUJIB'S 1973 ELECTION AND THE INFLATION OF TURNOUT (THE EXTRAS ALL VOTING "YES")

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 (ISO) W  
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R 150925Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9754

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 DACCA 3797

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING ZIA'S REFERENDUM LAST YEAR. BOTH THE RECOGNITION THAT THE ELECTION WAS GENERALLY FAIR AND THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD NOT SUPPORT A CHALLENGE TO IT HAVE COOLED WHATEVER ARDOR THE AWAMI LEAGUE HAD FOR A PAKISTAN-STYLE RESORT TO THE STREETS. PRECAUTIONS, SUCH AS INCREASED CIVIL AND MILITARY PATROLS, WHICH WERE TAKEN IN DACCA JUST AFTER THE RESULTS BEGAN TO COME IN HAVE BEEN RELAXED.

5. THE AWAMI LEAGUE RATHER THAN CHALLENGING ZIA IN THE STREETS HAVE INSTEAD TURNED (OR RATHER RETURNED) TO INTERNAL FIGHTING AMONG THE "MODERATES" WHO FAVOR PRE-FOURTH AMENDMENT DEMOCRACY AND THE "LEFTISTS" WHO SUPPORT THE BAKSAL STYLE AND ARE ALLEDGED(WITH GOOD REASON) TO FAVOR A MORE PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-INDIAN STANCE IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. THE PARTY LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN IN ALMOST CONSTANT SESSION SINCE JUNE 5. ACCORDING TO REPORTS WE HAVE, THE LINES ARE RATHER WELL DRAWN BETWEEN  
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LEAGUE PRESIDENT ABDUL MALIK UKIL AND MIZANUR RAHMAN CHAUDHURY FOR THE MODERATES ON ONE SIDE AND BEGUM ZOHRA TAJUDDIN AND ABDUR RAZZAK FOR THE LEFTISTS ON THE OTHER, WITH THEIR FOLLOWINGS LINING UP BEHIND THEM. ALTHOUGH THE PRESS RELEASES ATTEMPT TO PAPER OVER THE SHARP DIFFERENCES, AS DID THE JOINT EFFORT FOR OSMANI, IT SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT THE PARTY WILL SPLIT FORMALLY WITH THE MODERATES, PERHAPS DRAWING CLOSER TO ZIA. WHETHER AS A CONTENTIOUS BUT OFFICIALLY UNITED PARTY OR AS TWO OPENLY COMPETING GROUPS, THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE IS BLEAK.

6. THE OTHER PARTIES IN OSMANI'S FRONT HAVE, AS WAS AGREED BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER, GONE THEIR SEPARATE WAYS SINCE THE ELECTION. BOTH THE NAP/MUZAFFAR AND THE CPB/MONI SINGH, MINISCULE IN THEMSELVES, WILL LIKELY ATTEMPT TO RETURN TO SOME ARRANGEMENT WITH THE AWAMI LEAGUE OR WITH THE LEFTISTS SHOULD THE LEAGUE SPLIT. THEY HAVE TRIED THIS TACTIC IN THE PAST BUT BOTH IN 1970 AND IN 1973 MUJIB TOLD THEM TO GET LOST (AND THEY DID

WHEN THE ELECTIONS WERE HELD). OSMAN'S OWN PARTY, THE JATIYA JANATA PARTY, WILL PRESUMABLY GO IT ALONE IN THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION.

7. THE MEMBERS OF ZIA'S FRONT OBVIOUSLY HAVE A BETTER REASON FOR STAYING TOGETHER AS THE PARTIES OTHER THAN JAGODAL WITH WHICH ZIA IS EXPECTED TO ASSOCIATE WISH TO RIDE THE PRESIDENT'S COATTAILS TO VICTORY IN THE PARLIAMENTARY POLL. HOWEVER THERE IS SOME OPENLY EXPRESSED THOUGHT IN THE ZIA GROUP THAT NOT ALL THE NON-JAGODAL MEMBERS WILL BE LONG-TERM ASSETS. FOR EXAMPLE, AS ZIA ACCUSED THE AWAMI LEAGUE OF BEING PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-INDIAN, THE CHARGES WERE RETURNED THAT HIS SUPPORTER, CONFIDENTIAL

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THE MUSLIM LEAGUE, WAS PRO-PAKISTAN IN THE 1971 FREEDOM STRUGGLE. THIS WAS TOUCHED OFF A FRACAS WITHIN THE MUSLIM LEAGUE IN WHICH PARTY PRESIDENT KHAN ABDUS SABUR (A MINISTER IN AYUB'S TIME AND NOW IN HIS MID-SEVENTIES) HAS BEEN "SUSPENDED" FROM OFFICE BY GENERAL SECRETARY SHAH AZIZUR RAHMAN AND SABUR'S SUPPORTERS ARE CHALLENGING THIS. SIMILARLY, SOME ARE QUESTIONING THE ROLE OF MASHIUR RAHMAN, LEADER OF THE FACTION OF THE NAP/BHASHANI WHICH SUPPORTED ZIA AND ARE USING THE WELL-WORN DESCRIPTION "OPPORTUNIST" TO DESCRIBE HIM. THE COHESIVENESS OF THE ZIA FRONT IS THEREFORE IN DOUBT.

8. NONETHELESS, ZIA WILL NEED SUPPORT FROM SOME QUARTER TO ARRANGE FOR 300 CANDIDATES TO CONTEST THE PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION. HIS CLOSEST ADVISERS, WE ARE TOLD, ARE SUGGESTING THAT HE REARRANGE THE TOP LEADERSHIP OF JAGODAL, DROPPING AT LEAST THE ALMOST SENILE VICE PRESIDENT ABDUS SATTAR FROM THE POST OF "CONVENER" AND PLACING IN CHARGE A YOUNGER AND MORE POLITICALLY ACTIVE ASSOCIATE, SUCH AS MOUDUD AHMED. MOUDUD'S TASK WOULD BE TO RECRUIT POTENTIAL CANDIDATES FROM AMONG YOUNGER PERSONS WHO HAVE OPTED OUT OF PARTY POLITICS IN THE PERIOD SINCE 1971 AND WHOSE REPUTATIONS ARE THOUGHT TO BE CLEAN. INDEED, THE PRESIDENT TOLD THE AMBASSADOR LAST WEEK THAT HE WISHED TO GET AWAY FROM THE POLITICAL OLIGARCHY WHICH HAS ALWAYS CONTROLLED BANGLADESH POLITICS AND SEEK NEW YOUNG LEADERS WHO HAD STRONG TIES WITH THE COUNTRYSIDE. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE POLITICAL RECRUITMENT IN BANGLADESH SINCE LIBERATION BOTH OWING TO THE ALREADY CLOSED RANKS OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE AND THE PERIOD SINCE 1975 WHEN POLITICS WERE BANNED OR SEVERELY RESTRICTED. THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, NATIONAL SECURITY INTELLIGENCE, HAS TOLD THE POLCOUNSELOR THAT HIS OFFICE HAD DRAWN UP A LIST OF POSSIBLE RECRUITS AND THAT THE LIST CONTAINED LAWYERS, BUSINESSMEN, SCHOOL TEACHERS AND OTHERS WITH PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUNDS WHO COULD BE

EXPECTED TO COMMAND SOME RESPECT AT THE CONSTITUENCY  
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LEVEL. A VILLAGE, THANA, CONSITITENCY, DISTRICT TIERING  
OF THE ORGANIZATION HAS BEEN SUGGESTED, BYPASSING THE  
SUBDIVISION LEVEL. (A QUESTION WHICH HAS NOT BEEN  
ANSWERED, NOR SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED, IS WHETHER THE CON-  
STITUENCIES WILL HAVE TO BE REDELIMITED FOLLOWING THE 1974  
CENSUS OR WHETHER THOSE WHICH WAS USED IN 1970 AND 1973  
WILL BE RETAINED.) TIME IS A CONSTRICTING FACTOR AS CAM-  
PAIGNING OUGHT SOON TO GET UNDER WAY BY CANDIDATES FOR A  
DECEMBER ELECTION. JAGODAL HAS SAID IT WILL HOLD A  
NATIONAL CONVENTION BY SEPTEMBER 30, WHICH SEEMS TO SOME  
TO BE A RATHER LATE DATE.

9. THE NATURE OF THE PARLIAMENT STILL HAS NOT BEEN  
DECIDED. ZIA MUST ADDRESS THIS QUESTION AS WELL AS THE  
FUTURE OF HIS OWN POLITICAL GROUPING.  
SCHNEIDER

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